

## Sermon Notes

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### “Who Cares About the Truth?”

John 14:6, Isaiah 59:1-15, Romans 1:18-25

Great Ends of the Church IV: Preservation of the Truth

Christianity is both Individual and Corporate

The “Great Ends of the Church” describe our Corporate Calling

1. The Proclamation of the Gospel for the Salvation of Humankind
2. The Shelter, Nurture, and Spiritual Fellowship of the Children of God
3. The Maintenance of Divine Worship
- 4. The Preservation of the Truth**
5. The Promotion of Social Righteousness
6. and the Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World.

### 1. The Spirit of Our Age

#### a. There is no ultimate truth to be found?

All a Matter of Perspective . . . “Whatever!” (Adams, Anderson)  
“*What is Truth?*” (Pontius Pilate to Jesus, John 18:38)

#### b. Those who claim to possess “the truth” use it and abuse it

Isaiah 59: 14 “*Truth stumbles in the public square*”  
Ideologies, Politics, Nationalism, Religions, even Science  
Newbiggin quoting Nietzsche: “*Any claim to know the truth is a concealed assertion to power.*”

### 2. The Ongoing Hunger for Truth

#### a. “*Just tell me the truth!*” (Lieutenant Kaffee, in *A Few Good Men*)

#### b. Proselytizing Skeptics (Mark Lilla)

“*But the curious thing about skepticism is that its adherents, ancient and modern, have so often been proselytizers.*” . . . *In reading them, I’ve often wanted to ask, “Why do you care?” Their skepticism offers no good answer to that question.*”

. . . Maybe “Hunger for Truth” exists because “The Truth” exists?  
(see *The Letter of Paul to the Romans, especially Chapter 1*)

### 3. Foundational Christian Truth – The Triune God

There is a Creator who is personal (Father, not just Force)  
who is passionate to be known by us,  
and has chosen to be revealed in Scripture, Creation,  
and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth (John 14:6)  
The presence of God can be experienced here and now by his Holy Spirit.

### 4. Prove it!

a. The Truth to Be Defended By Reason: “*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*” 1 Peter 3:15.

E.g., The good done by followers of Jesus compared to the bad!

#### b. The Truth as Axiom:

*An axiom is a proposition, a starting point, a (self-evident?) belief, that is assumed (i.e., without proof), for the sake of studying the consequences that follow from it.*

- See Romans 1, Leslie Newbiggin
- The Truth discoverable by Science/Math is frequently based on unprovable axioms – the axioms are reasonable to the extent that they lead to fruitful and remarkable results.
- The Truth in the Declaration of Independence is “axiomatic”: *we hold these truths to be self-evident*
- The Christian Truth we are called to preserve is “axiomatic” – the proof does not depend only on reason but on result: “tasting and seeing that God is good” (Psalm 34:8)

### 5. Preserving the Truth

- With humility but confidence . . . As those possessed by the truth, not as those possessing or owning it.
- The Truth: A person to whom we belong in life and in death  
[ Note: See the Declaration of Barmen – a proclamation preserving Christian Truth in in 1934 Nazi Germany, as a liberating alternative to the “truth” mandated by Hitler. <http://creeds.net/reformed/barmen.htm> ]

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Douglas Adams, *Mostly Harmless* (“You cannot see what I see; You create a universe by perceiving it”)

Walter Truett Anderson, *Reality Isn’t What it Used to Be* (The three umpires calling strikes)

Donald Borchert, *Embracing Epistemic Humility* (Humility in what we know)  
Timothy Keller, *The Reason For God* (There Can’t Just be One true Religion?)

Mark Lilla, *Getting Religion*, NYTimes Magazine, September 18, 2005

Leslie Newbiggin, *Truth To Tell* (references Michael Polanyi – google “Tacit Knowledge” – and the subjectivity that plays a vital role in much of science)

Joseph D. Small, *Preservation of the Truth*